Press release

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Fine start to the century at The Met. Office

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The Met. Office has won this year's race to be the first government Trading Fund Agency to file its Annual Report. The report shows that the nation's weather forecasters are in great shape.

For the first time, The Met. Office exceeded both its performance targets for computer based weather prediction, which are demanding measures of its underlying forecasting accuracy. Global weather forecast accuracy saw the biggest year-on-year improvement since the measurement began ten years ago.

There were a number of high-profile forecasts produced over the last twelve months, all of which were timely and accurate. These included the cloud and drizzle which spoilt Cornwall's total eclipse during August, and the relatively quiet weather as 1999 rolled into a new century followed by storms in Scotland on 2 January 2000. The Met. Office's forecasters also provided vital support to the UK's armed forces on deployment in Kosovo and Mozambique.

Other notable highlights of the last twelve months were the introduction of a Customer Call Centre, successful management of the Millennium Bug, and achievement of the Investors in People standard. The Met. Office's Hadley Centre also produced the world's first 'fully interactive'100-year climate prediction helping planners and policy makers to look at the impacts of climate change throughout the world.

The only disappointment was missing out on the financial target for commercial services. However, commercial business still helped to reduce the cost of public weather services to the taxpayer and continues to deliver a wide range of quality services to industry, commerce and private users of our premium services.

Speaking on the day the 1999/2000 Annual Report and Accounts was published. Peter Ewins, Chief Executive of The Met. Office, said: "By any measure we have had a successful year. We have started an investment programme which will maintain The Met. Office's status as a world leader in meteorology and help us expand into other associated areas of the environment, to the benefit of all our customers, both public and commercial."

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